

# This Week in Agriculture

## July 17-23, 2005

## Idaho State Department of Agriculture now managing Quality Assurance Lab

By Wayne Hoffman

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is now managing the Idaho Food Quality Assurance Laboratory in Twin Falls.

ISDA Director Pat Takasugi said the lab fits perfectly in the role and mission of ISDA.

The Legislature approved funding for the Idaho Food Quality Assurance Laboratory in 1990 in the wake of the National Resources Defense Council's 1989 report on pesticides in children's food that led to mass hysteria over Alar in the apple industry. Alar is a chemical used to regulate apple growth and enhance their color. But after the NRDC released its report and *60 Minutes* broadcasted a story ("*A*" is for Apple), the hysteria generated cost the apple industry millions of dollars.

Since then, studies have proven conclusively that Alar is indeed a possible carcinogen, but one would have to eat extraordinarily absurd quantities of apples in order to get cancer.



Ryan Yee, principal chemist at the Idaho Food Quality Assurance Laboratory in Twin Falls was named the lab's employee of the year during a meeting of the Food Quality Assurance Institute on July 6.

"The department's role and mission is to safeguard the public and the agriculture industry. The Quality Assurance Laboratory is the perfect combination of both," Takasugi said. "Millions of dollars were lost in the Alar scare. We don't want to see a repeat of that."

Others are pleased with the move to the department.

"It started out with the Department of Ag and I really think that's where it belongs, quite frankly," Rep. Darrell Bolz, chairman of the Food Quality Assurance Institute, told Ag Radio News reporter Bill Scott.

After reviewing the latest data available, Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi has determined that there is no economically viable alternative to the burning of crop residue. Director Takasugi's 2005 Determination, released today, clears the way for carefully-managed field burning to continue this summer.



**Director  
Takasugi**

"Based upon the record provided to me for review, I find that no economically viable alternatives to field burning currently exist for Idaho producers," Takasugi said in his Determination. Most significant, Takasugi noted, is the University of Idaho's research on feasible field burning

alternatives for bluegrass stands. In a letter to the director, the University indicated that there are "no proven economically sustainable, non-thermal residue management systems available" to Idaho growers.

Under Idaho law, the director must determine whether there is an economically viable alternative to burning that would allow growers to still dispose of residue, increase yields and control diseases, weeds and insects. While the law doesn't require the director to make an annual review, Takasugi does so anyway in order to examine the latest available information.

Earlier this year, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture solicited comments on possible alternatives to field burning. Of the responses received, none provided an economically viable

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alternative to field burning.

Takasugi also gave credit to the department's progressive, highly-coordinated smoke management program.

"We're proud of the great care and effort that has gone into the department's coordination of field burns," Takasugi said. "Our efforts have resulted in a more than 80 percent drop in the number of smoke complaints. Burns are more thoughtfully managed, with an eye toward air quality, and our agricultural neighbors are better off as a result."

## Growers get more opportunities in Latin America

Agriculture product sales from Idaho to Latin American countries continue to grow, and more opportunities for Idaho growers are on the way.

The USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) through the Western U.S. Agriculture Trade Association (WUSATA) has funded trade missions and in store promotions for 2005.

This is an opportunity for Idaho companies to explore the vast possibilities of Latin American markets.

A trade mission to Monterrey and Mexico City is planned for July 10 – 15.

The trade delegation will be meeting with top buying officials from the leading retail grocery

chains and warehouse store in Mexico.

Additionally, this is the second year of some very popular Mexico cooking shows that hold opportunities for Idaho growers.

The companies involved have great success stories testifying to the effectiveness of this marketing media.

The shows reach the target audience for Idaho consumer products in Northern Mexico, the wealthiest portion of Mexico. The cooking shows are slated for July 11 – 15 and October 22 – 29.

Onion buyers from the major chains will travel to Idaho this year. This is an on going annual event that has lead to yellow onions being accepted in the

For information on any of these event please contact Jerry Ward at (208) 332-8537 or by email at [jward@idahoag.us](mailto:jward@idahoag.us)

Mexican market.

Central America is a growing market. FAS designated it as a priority market for U.S. producers.

Finally, later this year there will be in- and out-bound trade missions in which to participate, and there will be an in store promotion at the major retailers in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

The events are scheduled for August and September this year.

**P**otato Growers of Idaho (PGI) will be holding its annual summer meeting in Twin Falls on July 12 - 16. It will be held in conjunction with the National Potato Council (NPC) summer meeting.

"The summer NPC meeting is normally hosted in the home state of the current president. This year NPC President Dan Moss, from Declo, is hosting the meeting," said PGI President Doug Hanks. "This gives Idaho growers a great opportunity to meet with other grower leaders from across the U.S. We invite all growers to come and see a little more of what PGI and the NPC are all about."

"Committee meetings will address important legislative, trade, environmental, farm bill, and other issues important to potato growers," said PGI

Executive Director Keith Esplin. "We encourage all growers to come and participate, as well as have a little fun. We particularly would like growers to come to the banquet and fundraising auction for the growers national political action committee, POPAC, Friday evening."

President and CEO of McCain Foods Limited, Dale Morrison will speak at the lunch on Friday, along with Frank van Schaayk, CEO McCain Foods USA. Pat Takasugi, director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, will speak at the Thursday morning breakfast and State Senator Brad Little will speak Friday morning.

Several important meetings for Idaho growers will be mixed in during the week. SIPCO growers will discuss some important bargaining issues Friday morning at 8:30 am.

The Seed Potato Growers will meet at 10 a.m. Friday and conduct a nomination for a representative to the U.S. Potato Board, along with other important business.

A brief meeting to nominate USPB representatives from the Magic Valley will be held at 5:00 pm Friday afternoon, prior to the evening activities. PGI's Executive Committee will meet Thursday evening.

A major topic of discussion will be the FSA's Quality Loss/Disaster Program.

Several fun social activities have been planned. Thursday afternoon there will be a golf tournament at the Blue Lakes Golf Club, rafting down the Snake River, and an evening in Jackpot, Nevada.

For more information contact Martha Dance at the PGI Offices, 208-785-1110.

## FSA acreage reporting deadline extended to August 1

**I**daho producers have until Monday, August 1, 2005, to file this year's crop acreage reports, announced Wayne Hammon, State Executive Director of the Idaho Farm Service Agency (FSA). Reports filed after that date will be assessed a late-filed fee.

Hammon added, "normally June 30 is the final date for crop reports to be filed, but with the very wet spring experienced throughout the state, planting was significantly delayed this year."

Producers are now also required to report the planting date for each crop by field so obtaining an extension for the 2005 crop year was a necessity."

Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a number of FSA programs, including Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs), Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

The deadline for reporting crops covered under NAP will be the earliest of August 1, 2005, (for this year only) or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing.

NAP crops which may be disaster affected prior to August 1, must have an acreage report on

For more information, contact Becky Rios at (208) 378-5667

file before a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, can be filed.

The Notice of Loss must be filed within 15 days of the disaster or 15 days after the loss becomes apparent.

Producers need to be aware that the August 1 extension only applies to FSA programs and does not apply to any federal crop insurance policies.

Producers are strongly encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to schedule an appointment before August 1, 2005.

# ICA announces winners of Heifer of the Year contest

The Idaho Cattle Association has announced the winner of its Heifer of the Year Contest.

Nearly 150 of Idaho's youth from grades 7-12 applied for the chance to win a registered purebred heifer and other prizes.

Contestants were required to complete an examination of 50 multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank questions, in addition to three of four essay questions.

The test was a difficult and challenging task for the industry's future leaders.

The participants must not only know about cattle production, but also current issues affecting the cattle industry.

Here are some sample questions:

- How do you feel a purebred heifer will help you reach your future goals?
- What issue do you believe has had the greatest impact on the beef industry in the last five years and why?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks for producers in implementing an animal identification system?
- Explain the benefits of cattle grazing on federal lands in Idaho.

**Kellie Grant, Rathdrum,** was the overall contest winner and will receive a registered Angus heifer donated by the Idaho Angus Association.

She also wins a custom handcrafted hat from Jaxonbilt Hat Company of Salmon.

**Maleah Huggins, Gooding,** placed second and will receive a \$750 scholarship

from the University of Idaho Steer A Year Program.

**Sara Malaise, Meridian,** placed third and will receive a \$500 scholarship from the University of Idaho Steer A Year Program.

**Nicole Harding, Caldwell,** tied for fourth place with **Casey Leppert, Caldwell.**

Nicole will receive a \$250 scholarship from the University of Idaho Steer A Year Program, and Casey will receive a \$250 scholarship provided by Agri Beef.

Receiving fifth place is **Amelia Naher, Fruitland.** She will receive a \$150 scholarship from Wells Fargo Bank, a \$40 gift certificate from Payette Valley Co-op., and \$25 from the Weiser River Cattle Association.

**Josette Nebeker, Kuna,** and **Elise Marchant, Oakley,** tied for sixth place. Josette wins a \$200 scholarship provided by Ada County Farm Bureau and Treasure Valley Livestock. Elise will receive a \$200 scholarship from the Twin Falls County Farm Bureau.

**Alicia Zabel, Kuna,** took seventh place. She will receive a \$150 gift certificate to West-

ern Stockmen's.

In eighth place was **Joanna England, Emmett.** Joanna will receive a \$100 scholarship from Elanco.

**Dacoda Cobb, Tonopah, NV,** receives a \$100 scholarship from Northwest Farm Credit Services for placing ninth.

**Jacob McRae, Homedale,** placed tenth and receives a \$75 gift certificate to Vickers Western Stores and a cooler from Allflex USA.

**Adeline Lustig, Cottonwood, Jake Turnbull, Cambridge, Berett Rosenkrance, Mackay, Kyle Nauman, Blackfoot, and Tyler Hayes, Rexburg,** are the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth place winners and will receive a backpack from Allflex USA.

The winners of scholarships have the option of using their money to pay for college expenses or towards the purchase of a purebred heifer from an ICA member.

The winners of the University of Idaho Scholarships may only use that money towards tuition expenses.

This Week in Agriculture is a publication of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. To contribute items to the newsletter, or for more

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The deadline to submit all articles is 10 a.m. Thursday